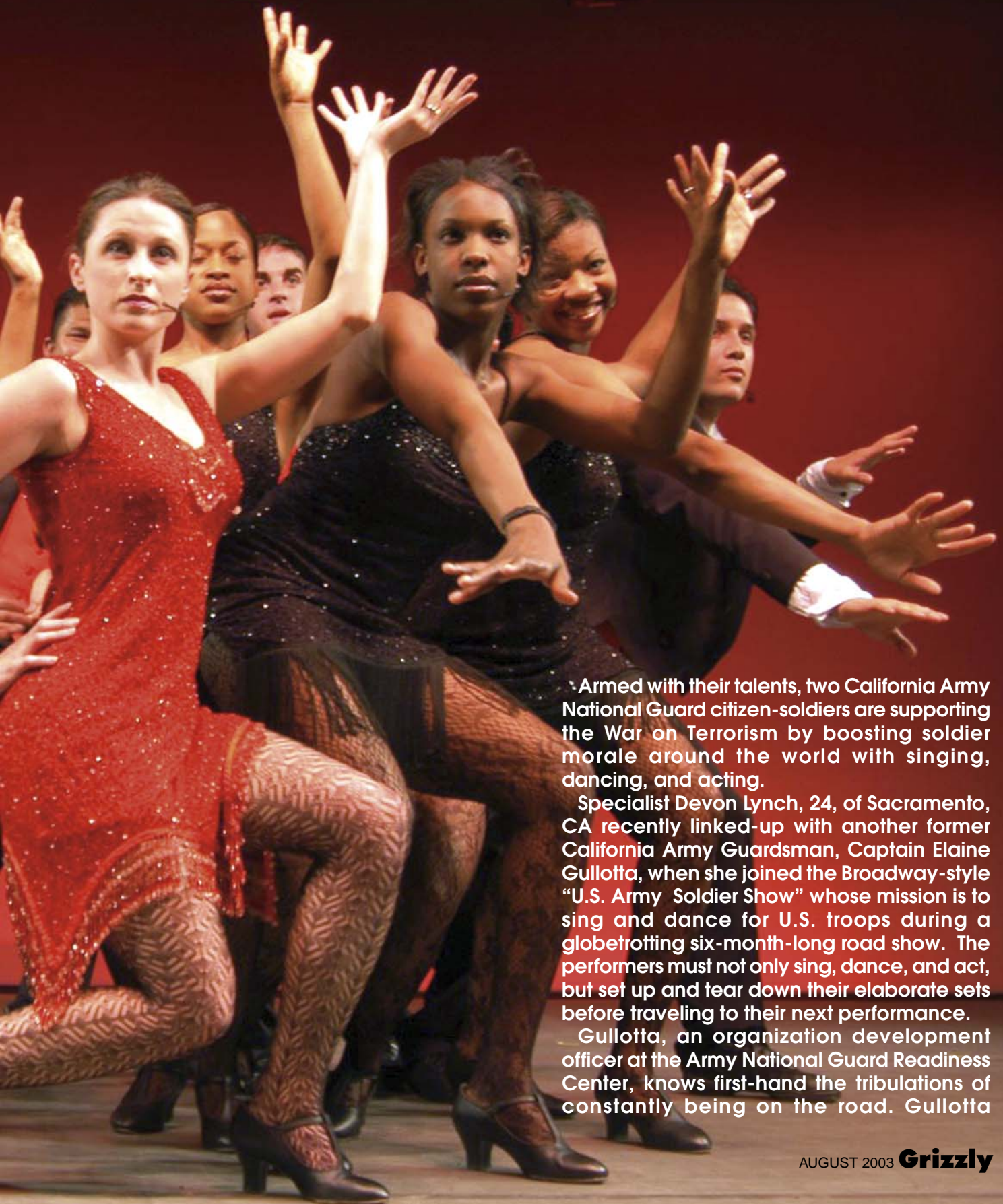


ALL THAT JAZZ





Armed with their talents, two California Army National Guard citizen-soldiers are supporting the War on Terrorism by boosting soldier morale around the world with singing, dancing, and acting.

Specialist Devon Lynch, 24, of Sacramento, CA recently linked-up with another former California Army Guardsman, Captain Elaine Gullotta, when she joined the Broadway-style "U.S. Army Soldier Show" whose mission is to sing and dance for U.S. troops during a globetrotting six-month-long road show. The performers must not only sing, dance, and act, but set up and tear down their elaborate sets before traveling to their next performance.

Gullotta, an organization development officer at the Army National Guard Readiness Center, knows first-hand the tribulations of constantly being on the road. Gullotta

performed in her first Soldier Show in 1984 as an Army private and 15 years later was the first Army National Guard citizen-soldier to perform in the show as a first lieutenant. "It's a grueling schedule," Gullotta said.

This year, more than 100 soldiers stationed around the United States and the world submitted videotape auditions, but only about a dozen were selected. A professional music director and choreographer previously working the Broadway circuit were hired by the Army to ensure the shows are top quality.

Lynch, who is a personnel administration specialist with the 115th Area Support Group, based in Roseville, California, was a two-year music major at the University of Northern Colorado. She said joining the Guard was a positive move, and the chance to perform in the Soldier Show adds to the benefits.

"The best advice I ever got was from my brother who said: 'Join the National Guard,'" Lynch added. "My advice to other soldiers is make the most out of the time you serve."

The two California Army National Guard citizen-soldiers are part of a 35-person crew of performers, technicians, and drivers attached to the U.S. Army Community and Family Support Center's Entertainment Detachment based at Fort Belvoir, Virginia. There, they practiced for six weeks and began touring in early May on a 103-performance world tour while visiting 57 separate locations ranging from Washington, D.C., to Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, to South Korea.

This year, the Army National Guard is the main sponsor of the show, featuring a tribute to Irving Berlin, along with newer Broadway songs like numbers from the rave Broadway hit, and Oscar winning movie, "Chicago." Lynch headlines the "Chicago" Broadway dance scene, "All That Jazz."

As they tour the nation in a convoy consisting of a 44-passenger bus, an Army black 18-wheel tractor-trailer and a 15-passenger chase van, both Gullotta and Lynch said they are bracing themselves for the 6-month-long tour. Despite the long hours on the road, Lynch said she still looks forward to the journey toward potential stardom.

"When I'm on stage performing, I feel a rush of excitement and energy," Lynch said. "It's wonderful, but it's tiring at times. But it's all worth it when you hear the soldiers hooting and hollering."

Army National Guard citizen-soldiers interested in trying out for next year's Soldier



YOU GO, GIRL! The California Army National Guard's own Specialist Devon Lynch "struts her stuff" in the U.S. Army Soldier Show's presentation of "Chicago."

Show can find information online at: <http://www.armymwr.com/portal/recreation/entertainment/armysoldiershow/> or they can contact Captain Gullotta in Arlington, Va., at (703) 607-9041. Article by Sergeant First Class Eric Wedeking, National Guard Bureau. 🐾